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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

4 October 1951

Memorandum for the Director of Central Intelligence

Subject: Recent Soviet and East German Diplomatic Attempts  
to Forestall West German Rearmament

On 11 September 1951 the USSR revived its diplomatic efforts to forestall West German rearmament by a note to France charging that French sponsorship of the Schuman and Pleven Plans violated the Franco-Soviet Agreement of 1944 and the Potsdam Agreement. The note was apparently timed to intimidate France on the occasion of the Washington Tripartite Meeting concerning Germany.

On 15 September following closely the note to France, the East German Volkskammer, at the request of Premier Grotewohl, passed a resolution proposing "joint all-German consultations between representatives of East and West Germany to decide on two tasks: (1) the holding of free, all-German elections with the objective of establishing a unified, democratic, and peace-loving Germany and (2) the speeding up of the conclusion of a peace treaty with Germany."

The new unity appeal contains two shifts in emphasis as compared to previous East German appeals: (a) omission of reference to the question of parity representation between

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East and West Germany at the proposed conference and (b) strong emphasis on "free" elections with a clear indication that elections would precede the creation of an all-German National Assembly.

Although the text of the Volkskammer Resolution does not specifically state that East Germany is willing to drop its former insistence on parity representation, Grotewohl in his Volkskammer speech of 15 September said that "the number of those taking part in such a conference is not of fundamental importance."

The strong emphasis in the new unity appeal on "free" elections throughout Germany to precede the creation of an all-German National Assembly marks another departure or, at least, shift in emphasis in the stated Communist position. Although former declarations and appeals have made vague reference to "a plebiscite of the German people under certain circumstances", the Communists have previously demanded the immediate creation of an all-German Constituent Council on a parity basis for the "purpose of preparing the formation of a provisional all-German Government." Thus, by implication all-German elections would follow rather than precede the formation of the provisional government.

The new Communist position on these two points is apparently designed to give the appearance of meeting West German objections to previous unity appeals and to place the onus of refusal of a "reasonable" offer on the Adenauer Government and the Western Powers. East German propaganda media are currently insisting that the new East German proposal is identical with the previous West German position.

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However, the new proposal makes no reference to previous West German insistence on Four Power settlement of conditions under which elections could be held and on the establishment of international safeguards regarding civil liberties. Grotewohl has always violently rejected these points and there is no indication that they are now acceptable. Actually the new proposal offers no concessions as to the nature of elections. "Free and democratic" is orthodox Communist terminology which was, for example, applied to the notorious East German elections of 15 October 1950. The Volkskammer Resolution also stipulates that "democratic organizations" as well as parties must be permitted to present lists of candidates and form election blocs, thus making provision for two orthodox Communist election practices. Furthermore, East German failure to insist on parity representation constitutes no real concession as the mere presence of a West German majority at the proposed conference would in no way ensure East German acceptance of unpalatable conditions. Grotewohl intimated as much in his speeches of 15 and 19 September.

On balance, the new unity appeal does not in itself seem to indicate Soviet interest at this time in German unity on terms acceptable to the West. Grotewohl's rejection of the West Berlin Government suggestion to hold free elections throughout the city as a test of Soviet sincerity appears to substantiate this point of view. Both the note to France and the Volkskammer Resolution seem to fall in the same category--additional steps in the elaborate Soviet campaign to forestall West German rearmament through the exploitation of popular opposition in France and West Germany.

Current East German official statements and propaganda treatment of the new appeal suggest that the unity issue will be the focal point of immediate Communist activity in Germany.

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In this connection, the East German regime may sponsor new versions of its proposal containing or seeming to contain other concessions. Future Communist treatment of the unity issue will probably be conditioned by West German official and popular reaction to this latest proposal.

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